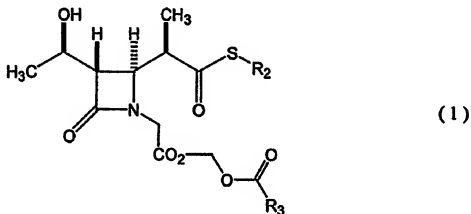


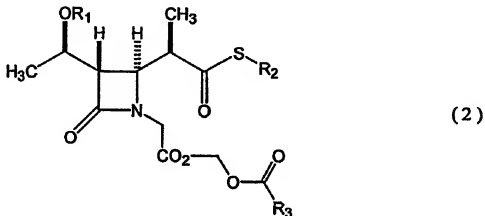
In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 7 and 15. Cancel Claims 11-13. A complete listing of the claims with proper claim identifiers is set forth below.

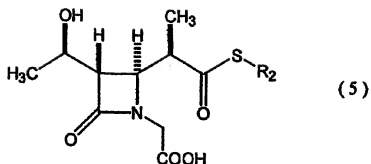
1. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a β -lactam compound comprising protecting the hydroxyl group of a compound represented by formula (1):



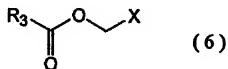
(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; and R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms), to produce a compound represented by formula (2):



(wherein R_1 represents a trimethylsilyl group or a triethylsilyl group; and R_2 and R_3 are the same as above); cyclizing the compound (2) in the presence of a strong base wherein the strong base is a base selected from the group consisting of an alkali metal alkoxide, an alkali

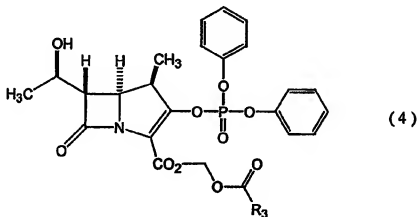


(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group), to react with a compound represented by formula (6):



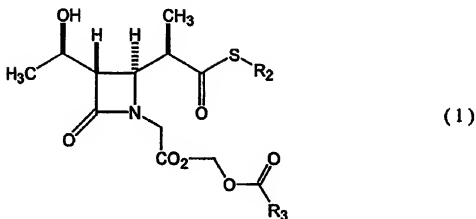
(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms; and X represents a halogen atom), in the presence of a base.

7. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a β -lactam compound represented by formula (4):



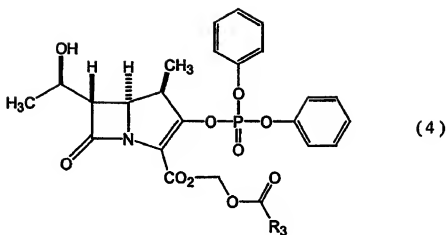
(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms), the process comprising deprotecting the hydroxyl moiety of the compound represented by formula (3) produced by the process according to any one of Claims 1 to 6 1 and 3-6.

8. (Previously Presented) A compound represented by formula (1):



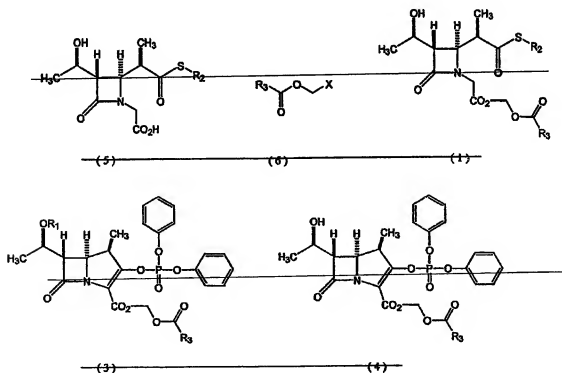
(wherein R₂ represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; and R₃ represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms).

9. (Original) The compound according to Claim 8, wherein R₂ is a phenyl group or a p-chlorophenyl group.
10. (Original) The compound according to Claim 8 or 9, wherein R₃ is a tert-butyl group.
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Previously Presented) A compound represented by formula (4):



(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms).

15. (Currently Amended) The compound according to Claim 14, wherein R_3 is a tert-butyl group.



(In the formulae, R_1 represents a trimethylsilyl group or a triethylsilyl group; R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; R_3 represents an alkyl group or a cycloalkyl group; R_4 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; R_5

~~represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms; and X represents a halogen atom.)~~